



NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Recommends Volunteers Assisting With Clean-Up in Northwood Check Their Vaccination Status

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is recommending all volunteers check their tetanus vaccination status before helping with debris removal in Northwood.

Tetanus is an infection caused by bacteria. Tetanus, also known as lockjaw, causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body. It can lead to “locking” of the jaw so the infected person cannot open his or her mouth or swallow. Tetanus leads to death in up to two cases out of 10. The bacteria enter the body through cuts or wounds. Because of the debris in Northwood, and the possibility for cuts and wounds, all clean-up workers and volunteers are recommended to be vaccinated against the disease.

There are two vaccines that protect against tetanus and that are available for adults. Clean-up workers, ages 19 through 64 years, should receive one dose of tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine if it has been ten years since their last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. If Tdap is unavailable, tetanus and diphtheria (Td) vaccine may be used. People ages 65 and older should receive Td vaccine, since Tdap is not approved for those older than 64. Adolescents, ages 10 through 18, also should receive Tdap vaccine if they have not received a dose in the past five years.

Clean-up workers and volunteers should contact their health-care provider or local public health unit if a vaccination is needed prior to assisting in the clean-up effort.

For more information, please contact Stacy Eberl, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4619.

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